

Board should take task force's advice

It's a typical bureaucratic policy. Appoint a task force, wait for its results, then reject them out of hand. Politics, Lane County style.

Almost nine months ago, the Lane County Board of Commissioners created a task force to study the homeless problem in the area, and come up with viable solutions.

The task force has come up with an expensive, 10-year project. The commissioners, save one, have rejected it in one form or another.

The plan centers on creating a non-profit corporation to develop and build low-cost housing in the area. The initial cost is \$1.5 million, to be culled from various governments within the county. As can be expected, the city of Eugene will carry a large share of that financial burden.

Commissioner Jerry Rust has given his approval to the plan. But Rust has been drowned out by the other four members of the board, particularly Bill Rogers, who favors a smaller, much cheaper plan.

Most of the controversy is over how the program will be funded. The task force has recommended several ways to raise the needed capital. Almost \$750,000 annually would come from county business licenses; \$225,000 would be raised from interest on real estate sales escrow deposits, another \$65,000 would be taken from county housing authority payments, and \$95,000 a year from contributions.

While these moneys, in part, already exists, the plan also requires a three-year property tax levy, which would raise about \$3.6 million. This item is giving some of the commissioners fiscal nightmares.

For any commissioners who balk at shelling out big bucks for the homeless, we suggest a stroll down 13th Avenue between University and Alder. Look around. See all the people, sitting on the concrete. This is just one example of the county's problem.

The board should accept the task force's proposal. While the cost of the program should be considered, no half-measures will work. The homeless problem requires all the resources and enthusiasm the county government can muster.

The commissioners need to listen to their constituency. People are clamoring that something — anything — must be done. Now that the board has a viable plan in hand, it's time they got cracking.

The problem will not go away simply by ignoring it, or working on only a small part of it. The plan may be ambitious, but maybe in a few years, the rest of the country can look at Lane County as an example of what a county government can do to help its inhabitants.



WISTEC donations needed, appreciated

Every once in a while, something comes along that restores your faith in people's generosity.

The Willamette Science and Technology Center, commonly referred to as WISTEC, closed down in August because it didn't have enough money to stay open. Now, because of donations from city and county governments, as well as individuals and local businesses, the non-profit science museum will reopen in February.

To that we say bravo. We've talked about WISTEC before, when the center was looking for money to reopen. We supported them in their efforts then, and we applaud their results now.

The list of contributors is long. The Lane County Board of Commissioners gave WISTEC \$10,000, pushing the total donations to over \$90,000. To open its doors again, WISTEC needed 75 percent of their \$128,000 minimal operating budget. The donations, when coupled with projected 1990 revenues, puts the center just over the limit.

We're happy the museum will reopen. There is really no way of calculating just how valuable the center is to the University and its students. Anything that assists in

gaining knowledge should not be closed because of fiscal concerns.

It's gratifying that the local community, as well as the local governments, realizes how much WISTEC means to the area. Hopefully, all the contributions were not one-time affairs. The organizations and people who donated this time should strive to make it an annual effort.

The reopening does not get WISTEC out of the financial maze it's been in for the last few months. Not yet. The center still needs about \$30,000 to continue to operate. This money will have to come from sources within the community.

Besides the county commissioners, WISTEC also received money from the Springfield and Eugene City Councils. This was the first time the museum got any sort of money from local government.

That it was done is a welcome change of direction. If the city and county are willing to make donations, maybe they'll be willing to subsidize the center.

We congratulate those who made the reopening possible. But we also urge them, especially the local governments, to continue their charity.

Letters

Turning point

November 9, 1989 should go down in history as a turning point in world affairs. That's if Gorbachev's approved plan of removing the barriers between East and West is followed by Bush and other Western leaders' removal of barriers of mistrust.

Americans, especially Oregonians, stand to gain if an economic shift is made from a pro-war, nuclear weapons build-up based on fear of Communism, to one that deals with security at home by investing in education, housing, the rehabilitation of cities and towns, improvement of our roads, bridges, sewers and environment.

What act beyond the opening of the Berlin Wall, and visit by Lech Walesa, is necessary to prove to us that the Eastern Bloc is taking their finger off the trigger and extending a handshake for trade agreements?

Our Congress just passed a bill spending \$4.3 billion on the Stealth Bomber, and \$3.8 billion on Star Wars when our "enemy" is turning more dem-

ocratic. Opening of the Iron Curtain should get the stage for rewriting the script. The Japanese can out-perform us because their government invests heavily in companies that research and develop consumer goods, and spend only five percent on their military.

With reinvestment of our tax dollars away from the military-industrial complex, we won't have to temporarily depend on state-sanctioned lottery gimmicks that tax people's false hopes.

The wall has been broken to restructure a more sound foundation of hope and economic stability. President Bush does not have time to put his feet in Malta; he needs to roll up his sleeves with Gorbachev and pound swords into plowshares.

Brad Perkins
Eugene

On DeFazio

The recent article by John Higgins ("Aide to DeFazio assesses new El Salvador uprising," ODE, Nov. 15), although factually correct in reporting,

created a distinctly false impression regarding Rep. DeFazio's responsiveness to the critical situation in El Salvador.

Rep. DeFazio has been at the forefront of congressional efforts to reverse the interventionist policies of the Reagan and now Bush administrations; his co-sponsorship of House Joint Resolution No. 54, prohibiting military assistance for El Salvador, is only one of many such efforts.

Rep. DeFazio's staff, both locally and in Washington, D.C., has displayed no less than the utmost professionalism and responsiveness to constituent concerns regarding U.S. involvement in El Salvador and in all other issues, for that matter.

I sincerely apologize for any confusion my statements to the Emerald may have caused.

Phillip B. Zerbo
University of Oregon
University of El Salvador
Sister University Project

Misinformed

This letter is addressed to all of the people who attended the

discussion after the movie "Do The Right Thing" on Monday, Nov. 6, and to the University community in general.

During the discussion, someone made the point that racism is not exclusive to places other than the University, and that racism occurs here too. He cited the Women's Center as a place where people of color are not represented. This person is misinformed!

As a woman of color employed by the Women's Center, I feel it is my duty to let him and everyone know that I am one of seven women of color

represented there. The Women's Center also welcomes and provides services for women of any age, religion, sexual orientation, or who are differently abled.

We hold diversity as a high priority, and our staff and services reflect that priority. I realize that this person made a valid point, but in doing so, he gave false information to at least 100 people. Misinformation can be as damaging as racism.

Carol Cheney
Women's Center

Letters Policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.